



Original Research Article

A Study on Attitude towards Compulsory Rural Health Services among Interns Who Have Completed RHTC Postings of Shri B.M. Patil Medical College

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The health sector in India faces multiple challenges in the geographic distribution of human resources for health. Though about one-third of Indians live in rural areas, the population-to-doctor ratio is much higher in rural than urban areas. According to WHO 2007 report, 80% of qualified doctors are concentrated in urban area.

Objectives:

1. To study the attitude of interns towards RHTC postings during internship.
2. To study the attitude of interns towards compulsory rural health service.

Methodology: This was a cross-sectional study conducted in Bijapur city during October 2012. 64 interns who have completed RHTC postings were included in the study. The data was collected in a semi structured questionnaire.

Results: Total 64 interns participated in the study. Among them 34 (53.12%) were male and 30 (46.87%) were female. 56 (87.5%) interns opined that RHTC postings is necessary during internship. All the interns were aspiring for post- graduation seats. 40 (62.5%) interns were unhappy with the upcoming government rule of compulsory rural service for one year.

Conclusion: The attitude of interns towards compulsory rural service is not favourable. Better facility at the rural health centers can attract some junior doctors.

Key words: Attitude, Rural service, interns

INTRODUCTION

The health sector in India faces multiple challenges in the geographic distribution of human resources for health.^[1] The distribution of doctors is highly skewed in favour of urban areas though about 68.84% of Indians live in rural areas.^[2,3] The density of allopathic doctors is four times larger in urban compared to rural

areas. AYUSH doctors also have a stronger presence in urban compared to rural areas.^[4]

Many rural and poor urban Indians receive curative care from unqualified providers due to the scarcity of qualified physicians in these areas.^[5,6] To tackle this problem the government of India has introduced compulsory rural health training posting during internship to sensitize them

for rural conditions and health problems as per Bhore committee report. [2]

National Rural Health Mission has made good effort to tackle the problem of lack of doctors in rural area. Still it is facing several constraints, such as insufficient deployment of human resources, especially in the health institutions located in the rural areas and lack of sufficient infrastructure. Although 269 medical colleges in the country produce 30,922 doctors each year and there are 683,582 registered allopathic doctors in the country, only one in 10 doctors works in rural area. A fraction of rural health centres have the necessary physicians, surgeons and other personnel. [7]

Each year, students get admitted to medical colleges with definitive objectives and attitude. They are destined to serve the humanity in need irrespective of the geographical distribution of their placements. Now-a-days students graduating from the medical institutions are opting to work in urban than rural areas. Added to this is the emerging trend of medical graduates preferring to pursue postgraduation, which has become a mandatory thing which prevents them in entering rural sector to deliver health care needs. [8]

At present, India has a doctor to population ratio of 1:1800. [9] This alarming increase in population-to-doctor ratio in rural areas is a cumbersome issue for the governments. Various reasons contribute to the shortage of qualified health professionals in rural areas which include poor living standards for the family, lack of financial progress, opportunities for skill up gradation, social, and professional development. [10]

So the government of India is introducing compulsory rural service for MBBS graduates. This study tries to focus on perceptions of interns towards compulsory RHTC postings and compulsory rural service.

Objectives

1. To study the attitude of interns towards RHTC postings during internship.
2. To study the attitude of interns towards compulsory rural health service.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: cross-sectional study.

Study Period: October 2012.

Study Sample: 64 interns who completed RHTC postings.

Sampling Method: simple random sampling.

Exclusion Criteria: Interns who have completed RHTC postings but have taken transfer to other college.

A predesigned questionnaire was used to collect the data. Institutional ethical clearance was obtained before the study. Informed consent was taken from the participants. Data was entered in Microsoft excel sheet and analyzed using percentages, Bar diagram and pie chart.

RESULTS

Total 64 interns participated in the study. Among them 34 (53.12%) were male and 30 (46.87%) were female. 56 (87.5%) interns opined that RHTC postings is necessary during internship. Most common reason given by them was to get practical experience.(Figure 1) Language problem and inaccessibility to tasty food were common reason given for not favoring RHTC posting. Majority i.e. 40 (62.5%) interns told that duration of RHTC postings should be of one month.

All the interns were aspiring for post- graduation seats. 10 (15.62%) interns were interested to do post- graduation in community medicine. Most common reason to choose clinical field was to serve the people followed by better future. (Fig 2)

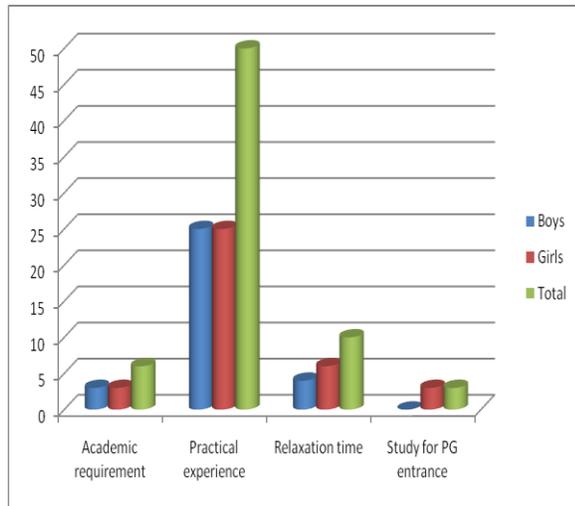


Figure 1: Showing the necessity of RHTC postings.

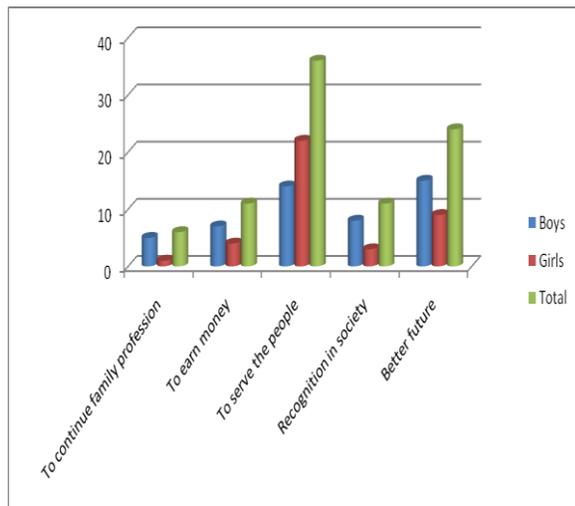


Figure 2: Reason for choosing clinical field for post-graduation.

40 (62.5%) interns were unhappy with the upcoming government rule of compulsory rural service for one year. The reason given was it will hamper their preparation for post-graduation degree. 46.6% girls opined that if they get married, it will be difficult for them to go for rural service. 11 interns were happy with the government decision. The main reason for this opinion was they can earn some money along with PG preparation. (Figure 3)

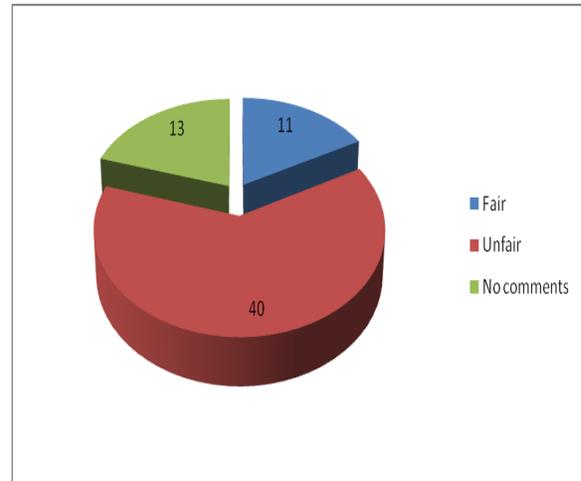


Figure 3: opinion regarding one year compulsory rural health service.

The facility expected by the interns to do rural service are good incentive (30000-50000), accommodation facility, transportation facility and postings near hometown. (Table 1)

Table 1: Showing the facility expected during rural service.

| Facility expected | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Good incentive | 25 | 39.06% |
| Accommodation facility | 27 | 42.18% |
| Transportation facility | 35 | 54.68% |
| Postings near hometown | 49 | 76.56% |

Multiple answers were given.

DISCUSSION

In our study majority of the interns are interested to go for RHTC postings to get practical experience. All the interns want to perceive post-graduation similar to study done by Vishali Gaikwad. [4] Majority want to choose clinical field for post-graduation. In our study 62.5% interns were not ready to serve in rural area similar to studies done by Vishali Gaikwad where 56% did not want to serve in rural area [4] and 50% in study by Wandira et al. [11]

In our study the main reasons not to serve in rural area are no proper accommodation facility and less incentive. The reasons quoted in the study by Vaishali Gaikwad were no clinical infrastructure, no

physical work environment, no living facility and no connectivity. [4]

In a study by Raghavendra et al, 31.9% of Malaysian and 43.4% of Indian students expressed interest in serving in a rural area for few years after graduation. The reasons for not willing to work in a rural area included; lack of infrastructural, clinical facilities, poor basic needs, work load and no career growth. [12]

A study by Sridhar et al, 46% of PGs had rural background and 56% of PGs were interested to work in rural areas among those only 17.88% are willing to work permanently in rural areas. 91% are of the opinion that presently paid incentives are insufficient and only hiking salaries won't attract doctors to serve in rural areas but there is also a need to address about working conditions, children's education, living conditions and safety. [13]

An editorial by SP Kalantri says that their experience in medical college established in semi-rural environment specifically to encourage community-based practice is that none of these strategies has been successful in encouraging medical students to stay and practice in rural areas. Students from rural backgrounds are as likely to practice in cities as are their urban raised peers. [7]

CONCLUSION

The attitude of interns towards RHTC postings is satisfactory. Their attitude towards compulsory rural service is not favourable. Better facility at the rural health centers can attract some junior doctors.

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